

MA(Res) in Applied Linguistics

For students entering in 2012/3

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Arts, Humanities and Social Science Faculty
Programme length:	1 years
Date of specification:	29/Oct/2012
Programme Director:	Dr Jackie Laws
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	Applied Linguistics
Accreditation:	

Summary of programme aims

This programme is intended as intensive training for those wishing to pursue doctoral studies in Applied Linguistics. It aims to provide students with a range of historical and theoretical perspectives, and specialist knowledge in particular areas of applied linguistics research, and with technical expertise in related research methods. The programme also aims to foster an independent approach to learning.

Transferable skills

The programme has been conceived as preparation for advanced research in applied linguistics. Transferable skills are to be seen in relation to this overall conception, and are as follows:

- practical skills in the analysis of language
- an ability to derive research questions from a body of relevant literature
- an ability to design a substantial piece of research, both for an MA dissertation and a PhD thesis
- the ability to synthesise, analyse and evaluate information and theoretical claims
- critical skills (demonstrated both in written presentations and in the oral evaluation of the work of fellow students and others)
- written communication skills (ranging from report writing, through medium-length essays evaluating arguments, to large-scale sustained argumentation)
- oral communication skills (to different types of audience and in different formats)
- ability to apply a range of data handling and analysis techniques interpersonal skills and skills in project management and teamwork
- bibliographic skills (library, searches, Internet, and referencing and indexing software)
- an understanding of ethical issues in research
- an understanding of intellectual property rights

Programme content

The 180 credits of the programme are distributed as follows:

30 credits drawing on generic social science training modules provided centrally by the University but supplemented by the department (20 credits), and a 10 credit module on linguistic research provided by the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics.

60 credits delivered as two taught modules by the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics

90 credits are allocated to a 20,000-word dissertation, handed in in September, and a dissertation proposal module which includes a presentation.

Compulsory modules

Autumn term

LSMILR	Issues in Linguistic Research	10	7
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Autumn and Spring terms

LSMERM	Essentials of Research Methods	20	7
LSMPRO	Full Dissertation Proposal	10	7

Summer term and Vacation

LSMDSR	Dissertation	90	7
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Option modules

Students choose two option modules from the following:

Autumn Term				
LSMCLR	Child Language Development	30	7	
LSMSLR	Second Language Learning Principles	30	7	

Spring term and Summer Terms

	Spring term			
LSMSOR	Sociolinguistics	30	7	
LSMPLR	Psycholinguistics	30	7	
LSMEWR	English in the World	30	7	
LSMLCLR	Language Curriculum Design	30	7	
LSMTPR	Language Testing Principles	30	7	
LSMESR	English for Specific Purposes	30	7	
LSMWLR	Written Language (Reading & Writing)	30	7	
LSMIBR	Issues in Bilingualism	30	7	
LSMEPHR	Experimental Phonology for Language Teachers	30	7	
	Summer term			
LSMITR	Information Technology for Language Teaching	30	7	
LSMSPR	Spoken Language	30	7	
LSMYLR	Teaching Young Learners	30	7	

These modules incorporate teaching on modules provided for the MA in ELT and MA in Applied Linguistics programmes (each of the codes given is the code for an existing MA module, with the addition of the letter R in final position, to indicate 'Research'.) These are 20 credit modules, and the MA (Res) module will follow the standard assessment for the module with the addition of a further requirement, the writing of an extended annotated bibliography in the module subject area, worth 10 credits.

Part-time or modular arrangements

The programme is offered on a part-time basis, normally over a period of up to 24 months. The structure of these arrangements is as follows:

Part-time (24 months):

Year 1: Foundation course: All modules excluding the Dissertation and Full Dissertation Proposal

Year 2: Dissertation and Full Dissertation Proposal modules

Progression requirements

N/A

Summary of Teaching and Assessment

Modules are taught by lectures, seminars and small group practical work. One, Essentials of Research Methods, is taught via the web as well as face-to-face in tutorials. The Dissertation module additionally is supported by individual supervision. The majority of modules are assessed wholly by coursework. Full details are given in the module descriptions.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Mark Interpretation

70 - 100% Distinction

60 - 69% Merit

50 - 59% Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories

40 - 49% Work below threshold standard

0 - 39% Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a 2.1 degree (or equivalent) in Linguistics, Applied Linguistics or a related subject, especially one allied to the student's intended research area.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Alan Tonkyn

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Student Employment, Experience and Careers Centre (SEEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@il) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see www.reading.ac.uk/student

Within the School, there are considerable computing and technical facilities, including a well-equipped Language Research Laboratory which offers a range of computational and electronic hardware, and access to well-known language corpora, as well as a number of our own research databases. The School's computers host major statistical packages, such as Minitab and SPSS.

Each student is provided with a course handbook which contains full details of the degree programme, the staff and facilities in the School of Languages and European Studies, and a range of useful information including advice on preparation and presentation of written work, especially the dissertation, dates of terms and examinations, and assessment procedures and criteria. Each student is also provided with a Catalogue of core and option modules available to them, giving outlines and assessment details. The Programme Director and/or Personal Tutors will advise students on selection of modules, and on general matters related to learning and assessment. In addition, a series of Study Skills classes is provided in the Autumn Term to give guidance on note-taking and assignment preparation and writing. Module lecturers will advise students on preparation for their assignments or examinations.

Career prospects

Since the programme is primarily intended as research training, the focus must be on the outcomes in this area. Students will be fully equipped to undertake doctoral research in particular branches of applied linguistics. However, it is also envisaged that the skills acquired (specialist and generic) will be applicable to careers involving research, management, assessment, materials writing, translation, or consultancy related to language matters.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

None.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. Paradigms in social science research, particularly the nature of and relationship between qualitative and quantitative research
2. Contemporary descriptive linguistics
3. Key issues in applied linguistics
4. Detailed subject-specific substantive knowledge
5. Current issues in the student's intended research subject

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Web delivery - self-study module
Lectures
Tutorials

Assessment
3,000-4,000 word assignments for option modules and an annotated bibliography
Examination
Dissertation

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - *able to*:

1. Develop a coherent and logical discussion
2. Analyse and solve problems
3. Operationalize abstract concepts for testing of hypotheses
4. Assimilate rapidly-evolving concepts
5. Synthesise and evaluate information from different sources
6. Generalise knowledge and methods from one area of study to others
7. Apply theoretical concepts and research-based information to the handling of subject-specific problems and issues
8. Plan, carry out and present an extended independent investigation of a research topic
9. Evaluate theory in the light of data

C. Practical skills - *able to*:

1. Perform a grammatical analysis of some spoken or written text of English or another language
 2. Carry out a statistical analysis of language or language-related data, using appropriate descriptive and/or inferential statistics
- Different specific skills will be acquired depending on pathway and option modules taken. These may include:
3. Derive information from electronic linguistic corpora
 4. Transcribe a recording of spoken English using the International Phonetic Alphabet

D. Transferable skills - *able to*:

1. Use IT, including word processing and standard and statistical software
2. Define a research topic and mount a principled investigation by means of the formulation of research questions and the establishment of an appropriate methodology
3. Give oral presentations
4. Present arguments cogently in writing
5. Take a critical stance to literature read
6. Apply a range of bibliographic resources, including use of electronic resources
7. Manage time
8. Evaluate ethical issues in research
9. Manage research
10. Interpersonal skills

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Web delivery - self-study module
Lectures
Tutorials

Assessment
3,000-4,000 word assignments for option modules and an annotated bibliography
Examination
Dissertation

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Web delivery - self-study module
Lectures
Tutorials

Assessment
Oral presentation of Full Dissertation Proposal (3, 10)
Dissertation (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
Assignments (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9)

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Web delivery - self-study module
Lectures
Tutorials

Assessment
3,000-4,000 word assignments for option modules and an annotated bibliography
Examination
Dissertation

Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to

modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.